

# Structural Rules for Child Care Centers

This guide is prepared to assist providers' in building or remodeling a child care center. It was prepared for providers' convenience. It in no way replaces the actual Administrative Rules for child care providers. To reference the Administrative Rules used to create this guide, see the reference number at the far right after each item. To download a copy of the rules, go to: <http://health.utah.gov/licensing/rules.htm>

Indoor Environment	
Rule Information	Rule Number
1. If constructed prior to 1978, the building or playground structures must be tested for lead if there is any peeling, flaking, chalking or failing paint. If lead based paint is found, procedures from the local health department must be followed to correct the problem.	100-4(1)
2. There must be one toilet and one sink for every fifteen non-diapered children.	100-4(2)
3. School age children must have privacy while using the bathroom.	100-4(3)
4. Buildings constructed after July 1, 1997 must have a handwashing sink in each classroom.	100-4(4)
5. Infant & Toddler areas must meet <b>one</b> of the following criteria: A. There must be two sinks in the room. One used for food and bottle preparation, and the other for hand washing after diapering and non-food activities. B. There must be one working sink in the room used only for hand washing. All food and bottle preparation must be done in the kitchen and brought to the infant & toddler room by a non-diapering staff member.	100-4(5)
6. Infant and toddler areas must not be used as access to other areas or rooms.	100-4(6)
7. There must be ventilation in all rooms. This can be mechanical (Heat & AC) or by open, screened windows.	100-4(7)
8. Windows, glass doors, and glass mirrors within 36 inches from the floor must be made of safety glass, or have a protective guard. This must be documented by a seal on the glass or written documentation from the manufacturer.	100-4(10)
9. There must be 35 square feet of space per child in each classroom. Bathrooms, closets, staff lockers, hallways, corridors, lobbies, kitchens, or staff offices are not included when calculating square footage for children.	100-4(11)(12)(13)

10. Classrooms may not exceed group size even if there is enough square footage. (See tables 5 and 6)	100-11(4)(7)
11. Large rooms may be subdivided with furniture or temporary walls. Large rooms that are subdivided into sections that children do not have freedom of movement will be considered a separate classroom. Child care ratios and group sizes must be met and maintained in each separate area. When large rooms are subdivided each area will be treated as a separate classroom and must meet all of the classroom rules.	100-11(4)(7)

<b>TABLE 5</b> <b>Minimum Caregiver to Child Ratios and Group Sizes</b>			
<b>Ages of Children</b>	<b># of Caregivers</b>	<b># of Children</b>	<b>Maximum Group Size</b>
Birth - 23 months	1	4	8
2 years old	1	7	14
3 years old	1	12	24
4 years old	1	15	30
5 years old & school age	1	20	40

<b>TABLE 6</b> <b>Minimum Caregiver to Child Ratios and Group Sizes for Mixed Age Groups</b>			
<b>TWO MIXED AGES</b>			
<b>Ages of Children</b>	<b># of Caregivers</b>	<b># of Children</b>	<b>Maximum Group Size</b>
2 & 3 years	1	10	19
3 & 4 years	1	14	27
4 & 5 years & school age	1	18	35
<b>THREE MIXED AGES</b>			
<b>Ages of Children</b>	<b># of Caregivers</b>	<b># of Children</b>	<b>Maximum Group Size</b>
2, 3, & 4 years	1	11	23
3, 4, & 5 years & school age	1	16	31
<b>FOUR MIXED AGES</b>			
<b>Ages of Children</b>	<b># of Caregivers</b>	<b># of Children</b>	<b>Maximum Group Size</b>
2, 3, 4 & 5 years & school age	1	13	27

12. Hot water accessible to children may not exceed 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Each handwashing sink must have warm water.	100-12(7) 100-16(1)(2)
13. Indoor stationary gross motor play equipment, such as slides and climbers, accessible to children under age 3 may not have a designated play surface that is higher than 3' with a 3 foot use zone. If the equipment is less than 18 inches it must be surrounded by cushioning material at least 1' thick in a 3' use zone. For equipment 18" to 3' it must be surrounded by mats at least 2 inches thick or cushioning that meets ASTM standards also in a 3' use zone.	100-12(9)(a)(b)
14. Indoor stationary gross motor play equipment, such as slides and climbers, accessible to children age 3 and older may not have a designated play surface that is higher than 5-1/2' with a 6' use zone. If the equipment is less than 3' it must be surrounded by cushioning material at least 1 inch thick in a 6 foot use zone. If it is 3 feet to 5-1/2 feet it must be surrounded by cushioning that meets ASTM standards in a six foot use zone.	100-12(10)(a)(b)
15. For resting children, there must be an environment that provides subdued lighting, a low noise level, and freedom from distractions.	100-18(1)
16. Animals and animal equipment are not allowed in the food preparation or eating areas.	100-22(6)
17. Diapers must be changed at a diaper changing station.	100-23(1)
<b>Equipment</b>	
<b>Rule Information</b>	<b>Rule Number</b>
18. Trampolines are not allowed in the indoor or outdoor areas.	100-12(11) 100-6(12)
19. Only single use towels from a covered dispenser or electric hand-drying devices may be used to dry hands.	100-16(3)
20. There must be toilet paper on a dispenser at each toilet.	100-16(4)
21. Each child must have his/her own crib, cot or mat to sleep on. Cribs, cots and mats must be spaced at least 2 feet apart.	100-18(3) 100-18(10)
22. Diaper stations must be equipped with railing to prevent children from falling.	100-23(2)
23. Infants must sleep in equipment designed for sleeping such as a crib, bassinet, porta-crib, or play pen.	100-24(11)

24. Cribs must: A. Have a tight fitting mattress. B. Have slats no more that 2-3/8 inches apart. C. Have at least 20 inches from the top of the mattress top to the top of the crib rail. D. Have no strings, cords, ropes or other entanglement hazards strung across the crib rails.	100-24(12)
<b>Outdoor Environment</b>	
<b>Rule Information</b>	<b>Rule Number</b>
25. If constructed prior to 1978, the building or playground structures must be tested for lead if there is any peeling, flaking, chalking or failing paint. If lead based paint is found, procedures from the local health department must be followed to correct the problem.	100-4(1)
26. Windows, glass doors, and glass mirrors within 36 inches from the ground must be made of safety glass, or have a protective guard. This must be documented by a seal on the glass or written documentation from the manufacture.	100-4(10)
27. The outdoor play area must be safely accessible to the children. A center can meet this rule by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• having a playground that is directly adjacent to the building, so that children exit the building straight onto the playground.</li> <li>• having a fenced walkway from the building to the playground.</li> <li>• having the entire area that holds both the building and the playground fenced, provided the area inside the fence does not include parking lots, driveways, or anywhere else cars may be.</li> <li>• having a playground that can be accessed via a sidewalk, if the sidewalk does not pass through a parking lot, or near a busy street or water hazard.</li> </ul>	100-6(1)
28. The outdoor play area must have at least 40 square feet of space for each child. The outdoor play area must accommodate at least 33% of the licensed capacity at one time or be at least 1600 square feet.	100-6(2)(3)
29. The outdoor play area must be enclosed with 4 foot high fence or wall.	100-6(4)
30. The outdoor play area must have a shaded area.	100-6(10)
31. There must not be any gaps in the fence greater than 5" at any point. The gap between the bottom of the fence and the ground cannot be more than 5".	100-6(5)

<p>32. If there is a swimming pool on the premises that is not emptied after each use the following rules apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. It must be enclosed with a six" high fence or solid barrier that is kept locked whenever the pool is not in use.</li> <li>B. It must be maintained in a safe manner.</li> <li>C. All applicable state and local laws and ordinances related to the operation of a swimming pools must be followed.</li> </ul>	<p>100-6(7)(a)(b)(c)</p>
<p>33. An outdoor source of drinking water must be available to children whenever the outside temperature is 75 degrees or higher.</p>	<p>100-6(11)</p>
<p>34. All stationary play equipment (slides, swings, climbers, etc.) used by infants and toddlers must meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. No designated play surface may exceed 3" in height. A designated play surface is any flat surface 2"x2".</li> <li>B. If the equipment has a designated play surface (2"x2" flat surface) that is higher than 18" it must have a 3' use zone.</li> <li>C. Swings must have enclosed seats.</li> <li>D. Protective cushioning is required in all use zones. (See Tables 1, 2 and 3)</li> </ul>	<p>100-6(13)(a)(d)</p>
<p>35. All stationary play equipment (slides, swings, climbers, etc.) used by children age 2-12 years must meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. If the equipment has a designated play surface (2"x2" flat surface) or climbing bar that is higher than 20" it must have a 6' use zone.</li> <li>B. Protective cushioning is required in all use zones. (See Tables 1, 2 and 3)</li> </ul>	<p>100-6(13)(b)(d)</p>

<b>TABLE 1</b> <b>Depths of Protective Cushioning Required for Sand, Gravel, and Shredded Tires</b>					
Highest Designated Play Surface or Climbing Bar	Fine Sand	Coarse Sand	Fine Gravel	Medium Gravel	Shredded Tires
4' high or less	6"	6"	6"	6"	6"
Over 4' up to 5'	6"	6"	6"	6"	6"
Over 5' up to 6'	12"	12"	6"	12"	6"
Over 6' up to 7'	12"	Not Allowed	9"	Not Allowed	6"
Over 7' up to 8'	12"	Not Allowed	12"	Not Allowed	6"
Over 8' up to 9'	12"	Not Allowed	12"	Not Allowed	6"
Over 9' up to 10'	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	12"	Not Allowed	6"
Over 10' up to 11'	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	6"
Over 11' up to 12'	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	6"

<b>TABLE 2</b> <b>Depths of Protective Cushioning Required for Shredded Wood Products</b>			
Highest Designated Play Surface or Climbing Bar	Engineered Wood Fibers	Wood Chips	Double Shredded Bark Mulch
4' high or less	6"	6"	6"
Over 4' up to 5'	6"	6"	6"
Over 5' up to 6'	6"	6"	6"
Over 6' up to 7'	9"	6"	9"
Over 7' up to 8'	12"	9"	9"
Over 8' up to 9'	12"	9"	9"
Over 9' up to 10'	12"	9"	9"
Over 10' up to 11'	12"	12"	12"
Over 11'	12'	Not Allowed	Not Allowed

TABLE 3 Heights of Designated Play Surfaces That May Be Placed on Grass		
Infants & Toddlers	Preschoolers	School Age
Less than 18"	Less than 20"	Less than 30"

## Summary Characteristics of Protective Cushioning Materials

From CPSC Document #1005, Appendix A

### Organic Loose Material: Wood Chips, Bark Mulch, Etc.

#### INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE:

Should not be installed over existing hard surfaces (e.g., asphalt, concrete). Requires a method of containment (e.g., retaining barrier, excavated pit). Requires good drainage underneath material. Requires periodic renewal or replacement and continuous maintenance (e.g., leveling, grading, sifting, raking) to maintain appropriate depth and remove foreign matter.

#### ADVANTAGES:

Low initial cost. Ease of installation. Good drainage. Less abrasive than sand. Less attractive to cats and dogs (compared to sand). Attractive appearance. Readily available.

#### DISADVANTAGES:

The following conditions may reduce cushioning potential:

1. Environmental conditions; rainy weather, high humidity, freezing temperatures.
2. With normal use over time, combines with dirt and other foreign materials.
3. Over time, decomposes, is pulverized, and compacts.
4. Depth may be reduced by displacement due to children's activities or by material being blown by wind.

Can be blown or thrown into children's eyes. Subject to microbial growth when wet. Conceals animal excrement and trash (e.g., broken glass, nails, pencils, and other sharp objects that can cause cut and puncture wounds.) Spreads easily outside of containment area. Can be flammable. Subject to theft by neighborhood residents for use as mulch.

### Inorganic Loose Material: Sand and Gravel

#### INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE:

Should not be installed over existing hard surfaces (e.g., asphalt, rock). Method of containment needed (e.g., retaining barrier, excavated pit). Good drainage required underneath material. Requires periodic renewal or replacement and continuous maintenance (e.g., leveling, grading, sifting, raking) to maintain appropriate depth and remove foreign matter. Compacted sand should periodically be turned over, loosened, and cleaned. Gravel may require periodic break up and removal of hard pan.

**ADVANTAGES:**

Low initial cost. Ease of installation. Does not pulverize. Not ideal for microbial growth. Nonflammable. Materials are readily available. Not susceptible to vandalism except by contamination. Gravel is less attractive to animals than sand.

**DISADVANTAGES:**

The following conditions reduce cushioning potential:

1. Environmental conditions: rainy weather, high humidity, freezing temperatures.
2. With normal use, combines with dirt and other foreign materials.
3. Depth may be reduced due to displacement by children's activities and sand may be blown by wind.

May be swallowed. Conceals animal excrement and trash (e.g., broken glass, nails, pencils, and other sharp objects that can cause cut and puncture wounds).

**Sand:** Spreads easily outside of containment area. Small particles bind together and provide less cushioning when wet; when thoroughly wet, sand reacts as a rigid material. May be tracked out of play area on shoes; abrasive to floor surfaces when tracked indoors; abrasive to plastic materials. Adheres to clothing. Susceptible to fouling by animals.

**Gravel:** Difficult to walk on. If displaced onto nearby hard surface pathways, could present a fall hazard. Hard pan may form under heavily traveled areas.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Fine Sand** – Particles of white sand purchased in bags marked "play sand". 100% of the material must pass through a #16 screen.

**Coarse Sand** – Usually obtained from a supplier to the landscaping and construction trades. 98% of the material must pass through a #4 screen.

**Fine Gravel** – Gravel particles are rounded and 3/8 inch or less in diameter.

**Medium Gravel** --Gravel particles are rounded and 1/2 inch or less in diameter.

---

**Unitary Synthetic Materials:  
Rubber or Rubber over Foam Mats or Tiles,  
Poured in Place Urethane and Rubber Compositions**

**INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE:**

Some unitary materials can be laid directly on hard surfaces such as asphalt or concrete. Others may require expert under-surface preparation and installation by the manufacturer or a local contractor. Materials generally require no additional means of containment. Once installed, the materials require minimal maintenance.

**ADVANTAGES:**

Low maintenance. Easy to clean. Consistent shock absorbency. Material not displaced by children during play activities. Generally low life cycle costs. Good footing (depends on surface texture). Harbor few foreign

objects. Generally no retaining edges needed. Is accessible to the handicapped.

**DISADVANTAGES:**

Initial cost relatively high. Under surfacing may be critical for thinner materials. Often must be used on almost level uniform surfaces. May be flammable. Subject to vandalism (e.g., ignited, defaced, cut). Full rubber tiles may curl up and cause tripping. Some designs susceptible to frost damage.